

who claimed to be introducing a new era of intelligence and reform. When the mistake was found out, part of the members of the late Parliament were hastily summoned together in June, to raise the average quota of the villages from 22s. &d. to 116s.¹

As to the conduct of the war, men's hopes were even more bitterly disappointed. Catastrophe followed catastrophe in bewildering succession. In 1372, the young Earl of Pembroke, who had led the proceedings of the Parliament the year before, was sent out as governor of Aquitaine with a great army and a rich treasure to carry on the war. His fleet was surrounded off Bochele by a greatly superior force of French and Spanish, and after two days of hand-to-hand fighting, the English were overpowered by numbers and captured to a man.² The clerical party saw in it the hand of God against the despoilers of His Church,³ but the nation saw in it the death-blow of its sea-power, and of its dominion in France. In 1373 Poitou was lost, and a splendid English army under the Duke of Lancaster was almost destroyed by a march through France, which can be compared in character to Napoleon's Russian campaign. Exhaustion, not defeat in the field, sapped our resistance. In 1374 John of Gaunt returned to England to raise troops and supplies, but finding the country unable to furnish any more, left our garrisons in Aquitaine unsuccoured. By the end of the year they had nearly all surrendered to the French general.⁴ After the loss of Aquitaine the character of the war was entirely changed. As we no longer had large tracts of territory to defend, it was no longer necessary to keep great armies permanently in the field. Our operations were confined to garrisoning Calais, Brest, Bordeaux, and a few smaller fortresses on the coast, which were useful bases for fitful incursions into French territory — noble ports and entries whence to grieve the adversary.* The Duke of Brittany's strongholds were also garrisoned by our troops, and his struggle against his feudal

¹ *Rot. Parl.*, ii. 304; *Sl. B.* 1878, p. 185.

² *Froiss.*, vol. ii. chaps, xxxiv-vi. » *Wals.*, i. 314.

³ *Longman's Ed.* 7JJ., ii. 233-4; Mr. Oman, in *Social England* ¹⁸⁷⁸ ii. 178.

⁴ *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 34, SG-